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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2584

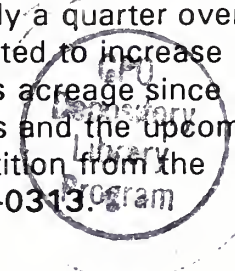
November 13, 1992

WHEAT RESISTANT TO RUSSIAN WHEAT APHID -- Scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service say a new wheat line resists the Russian wheat aphid (RWA). The pest is proving costly to American growers. Scientists have crossed an RWA-resistant wheat line with another line that offers more desirable agronomic traits, and their offspring over three generations have yielded 25 percent or less damage of leaf area on seedlings that contained both genes. Plant geneticists say the line will be released to plant breeders in 1993. Since the RWA arrived in the U.S. in 1986, its economic impact has been estimated at more than \$70 million spent on control, \$250 million in lost grain production and \$325 million lost in economic activity in local communities. **Contact: Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011.**

U.S. AND MEXICO FIGHT CHEMICAL-RESISTANT TICKS -- Scientists from USDA and the Mexican government are working together to identify and eliminate the cattle fever tick in Mexico that resists chemical controls. Previous tick control efforts have helped create the new wave of ticks capable of resisting chemicals. In the early 1980's, tick control programs used low doses of organophosphate against the southern cattle tick, and as a result of their continued exposure to organophosphate, the ticks have genetically changed to resist the chemicals. Scientists say the first step toward development of a resistance management technology is a field detection kit to let farmers know if ticks are resistant to organophosphate. Many northern cattle have died from the disease transmitted by the bite of this tick, and as a result, northern markets were closed to southern cattle ranchers. **Contact: Linda Cooke (309) 685-4011.**

ANNUAL PASTURE BURNING EXAMINED -- Burning residues from previous forage crops by farmers in the Southern Plains has become a springtime ritual. However, scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have found that annual burning of Old World bluestem crops reduced forage yields by 16 percent. By comparison, applying nitrogen fertilizer without burning crop residues increased yields several fold. Scientists have suggested that while controlled burning may be beneficial to control undesirable plant species or to eliminate heavy accumulations of dead plant material, limiting the burning to low-lying areas where the heaviest buildup is likely to occur is the best plan to follow. **Contact: Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011.**

FORECASTS -- USDA's 1992/93 forecasts call for a record corn crop, the second-largest rice crop, the largest soybean crop since 1982 and wheat output nearly a quarter over last year. Cotton output is expected to shrink. Citrus output is expected to increase because a survey of Florida citrus trees shows it has the highest citrus acreage since 1982. Turkey sales are expected to soar because of decreasing prices and the upcoming holiday seasons, but the poultry market continues to face stiff competition from the record-producing pork industry. **Contact: Barbara Claffey (202) 219-0313.**



LOOKING INSIDE ROOT NODULES -- Researchers with USDA's Agricultural Research Service have developed a portable oxygen monitor that uses optical fibers to light up plant roots and detect plants which regulate oxygen supplies to roots. Situations caused by drought, heat, excess fertilizer, or loss of leaves and stems to cattle or harvesting can cause stress to plants, which causes oxygen supplies to decrease and natural fertilizing nodules in the roots to shut down. Researchers say some soybean, alfalfa and other legume plants have a genetic ability to regulate oxygen supplies to plants under stress. They are hoping to find these plants and breed them into new varieties. Researchers say that when using the oxygen monitor, they can now diagnose in less than five minutes, right in the field, whether a stressed plant is allowing adequate oxygen into the nodules. Other techniques require digging plants up and taking them to a lab for analysis. A U.S. company is currently developing a commercial version that is expected to be available by the end of the year. **Contact: Don Comis (301) 504-9073.**

NEW INCENTIVE FOR TUBERCULOSIS ERADICATION -- USDA has proposed expanding its current indemnity provisions in hopes of reaching its goal of eradicating bovine tuberculosis by 1998. Currently, owners are required to quarantine tuberculosis-affected herds, and USDA indemnifies them for destroying those animals that test positive for tuberculosis infection or exposure. However, USDA currently does not pay indemnities for any animals added to the herd after being placed under quarantine. Under the proposed regulation, producers could file claims for cattle and bison added to herds under quarantine for tuberculosis. A federal- and state-approved herd management plan must be in place at the time of the claim. Officials with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, who administer the program, believe that to ensure the continued success of their program they need to provide an incentive for owners to rid their herds of marginal animals. They are hoping that this proposal will benefit the program and the owners alike. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (301) 436-5931.**

OVERWEIGHT TEENS AT RISK -- According to a USDA study, being overweight as a teenager can increase the chance of serious disease before age 73 for both men and women. Scientists have found that during adolescents, there is a shift in fat distribution from the arms and legs to the trunk, especially in males. They speculate that in overweight teenagers, an increase in fat around the mid-section may set the stage for adverse health consequences much later in life. The study consisted of subjects that were overweight, according to their body mass index, and the follow-up was 55 years later, allowing researchers to see life long effects on their subjects. **Contact: Judy McBride (301) 504-8932.**

BROADCASTING THE AGRICULTURE OUTLOOK CONFERENCE -- Key sessions of the 69th annual farm outlook conference will be televised over satellite on December 1st and 3rd, 1992. Satellite viewers should tune in channel 9 of the Galaxy 6 C band satellite. A test and tone will precede each broadcast. For more information, call (202) 720-3050.

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1849 -- It's an unpleasant subject, but when death comes to your family, it's often made even worse because no plans have been made for funerals or any of the other dozens of things that need to be done. **Brenda Curtis** has a special report. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1331 -- In search of Thanksgiving; cooking your holiday turkey; confessions of a turkey microwaver; those bees are coming; funeral planning. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1840 -- USDA news highlights; U.S./former Soviet Union cooperate in ag research; insects hurting U.S. beekeeping industry; the fate of this year's corn crop. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1546 -- Health food weed?; pharmaceutical farms?; weight loss benefit; diet & pain and gout medicine kills roaches. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, November 18, fruit outlook; Thursday, November 19, U.S. ag outlook update; Friday, November 20, wheat outlook; livestock/poultry update, cattle on feed; Monday, November 23, cotton outlook, ag trade update, catfish; Tuesday, November 24, crop/weather update, feed outlook; (From November 25 to November 30, there are no regularly scheduled USDA reports. We will not be changing the newslines on Thanksgiving.) These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newslines carry many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on food safety basics for preparing the Thanksgiving turkey and how to safely grill a turkey and **DeBoria Janifer** reports on holiday meat supplies and prices.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the latest weather and crop developments; USDA World Board Chairman **James Donald** on the latest supply/demand figures; USDA economist **Margaret Missiaen** on African food needs; USDA economist **Dan Plunkett** on Western Europe and **Susan Conley** with USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline on using smokers and microwaves to cook turkey.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on carbonated milk; **Pat O'Leary** reports on farmers helping farmers with conservation practices and **Lynn Wyvill** reports on mail order food safety.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program information in "news desk" format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 Mhz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., ET, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., ET, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

ATTITUDE IS GOOD...among most cattle producers, says **Evan Slack** (Evan Slack Network, Denver, CO), the cattle markets are holding up well. Evan will be attending a number of cattlemen's association meetings following the NAFB conference in Kansas City, including meetings in Nebraska, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana. He'll also be attending the Idaho grain producers meeting, and the Colorado wheat growers convention.

TRIP TO RUSSIA...was an eye opener, says **Bob Wade** (Progressive Farmer Network, Starkville, MS). Bob says Russian producers have two major problems confronting them, marketing and transportation. He noted the difficulty in communicating regarding cotton grading and standards; they are substantially different from the western world. A basic problem confronting all Russian producers is transporting the product. He noted little road maintenance, and road construction had halted. He says the transportation problem will hinder the cotton harvest this year.

NEW VOICE...on KIWA, Sheldon, IA is **Craig Shultz**, who replaces **Mark Sullivan**.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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DECEASED...**Pat Keliher** (WAXX, Eau Claire, WI, retired), Oct. 15, of a heart attack while in the hospital waiting for surgery. He was 84. **Bob Bosold** (WAXX, Central Ag News Network) says Pat started the station's farm department 25 years ago. Bob says Pat was the technician on the first federally funded Soil Conservation Service project in the U.S. The strips and contours he laid remain in place after more than 50 years. Pat kept weather records of the region for several decades.

FOOD PROJECT...connects the agricultural community and consumers in the Chicago area. Oct. 24, **Orion Samuelson** and **Max Armstrong** (WGN/Tribune Network, Chicago) broadcast from a suburban pumpkin farm urging listeners to bring food donations. The WGN staff was again successful in collecting several tons of food for the hunger food pantries in Chicago.

CHANGES...**Michael Perrine**, from WJIL, Jacksonville, IL, to WIBU, Poynette, WI as general manager. **Dick Sweeney**, formerly WJIL sports, returns as WJIL farm director.

VIC POWELL 
Chief, Radio and TV Division